

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the due consideration given the application.

Claims 12, 14 and 16-33 are pending in the application. Claims 13 and 15 are canceled by this Amendment. Claim 12 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 13 and 15. Claims 16 and 17 have been amended to stand as independent claims by each incorporating the subject matter of claims 12 and 15. New claims 22-33 set forth subject matter from claims 14 and 18-21, and thus present no new issues requiring consideration and/or search.

No new matter is believed to be added to the application by this amendment.

Statement of Substance of Interview

The Examiner is thanked for graciously conducting an interview with the Examiner's representative on September 20, 2007.

During the interview, the patentability of the invention was discussed, and it was agreed that amending claim 12 to incorporate the limitations of claim 15 and one of claims 13, 16 and 17 would distinguish the claims from the applied references and place the application in condition for allowance.

At the end of the interview, the Examiner prepared an Interview Summary. The Interview Summary has been reviewed, and it appears to accurately reflect the substance of the interview.

Rejections Under 35 USC §102(b)

Claims 12-14, 16-18 and 21 have been rejected under USC §102(b) as being anticipated by MANTELLE et al. (U.S. Patent 4,373,750). Claims 12, 14-15 and 18-21 have been rejected under USC §102(b) as being anticipated by TSURU et al. (US Patent 6,176,524). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claims 12, 16 and 17 have been amended to incorporate allowable subject matter acknowledged during the interview of September 20, 2007. Claims depending upon claims 12, 16 or 17 are allowable at least by their dependencies.

These rejections are believed to be overcome and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

Entry of Amendment

Entry of this amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 is respectfully requested because it cancels claims and places the application in condition for allowance. Also, claims 22-33 set forth subject matter that has received full consideration and/or search and thus raise no new issues.

Conclusion

The Examiner is thanked for considering the Information Disclosure Statements filed December 29, 2004 and March 29, 2005 and for making initialed PTO-1449 Forms of record in the application.

Prior art cited but not utilized is believed to be non-pertinent to the instant claims.

The rejections are believed to be overcome, obviated or rendered moot, and that no issues remain. The Examiner is accordingly respectfully requested to place the application in condition for allowance and to issue a Notice of Allowability.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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